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We don't wish to imply that most of you are philistines when it comes to art but let's be honest there aren't many rescuers topping the album charts or filling art galleries. So for those of you that struggle with the brown questions in Trivial Pursuits, Stathis Avramidis of the Greek Aquatic Rescue Society has compiled this first in a series on Rescue in Art beginning with

Artwork Depictions of Drownings and Rescues

Through the centuries, artists have been inspired by the phenomenon of drowning. Ordinary people, saints and historical figures have been threatened or have died by drowning. Although past research and previous scholarly work has documented very well what has been done in the past in terms of prevention and rescue of drowning, no previous effort has been dedicated to how artists perceived drowning and rescue in the past in terms of art. This article aims to show paintings depicting drowning episodes and rescue interventions from all around the world in various periods of time.



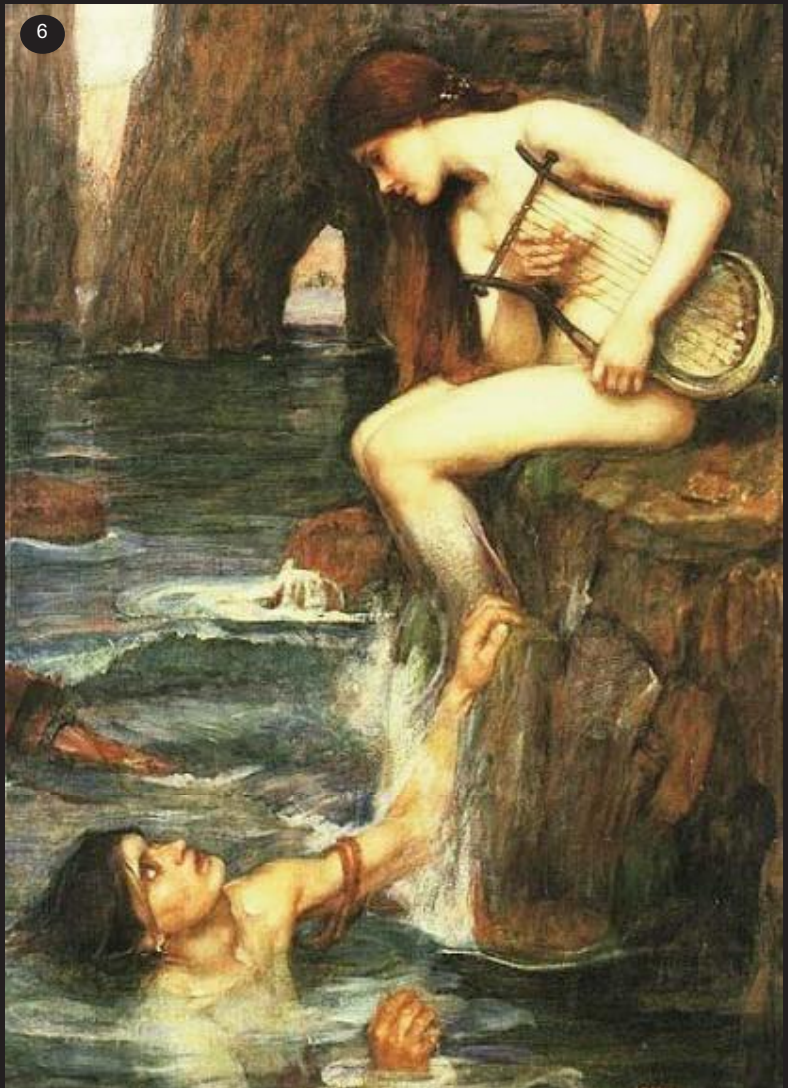
Pict. 1: 'In 'Drownings in Nantes under terror, 1793–1794' sinking boats drown their passengers.

Pict. 2: Villagers rescuing travellers drowning in a frozen river. Drawn by Zacharias Blyhooft.

Pic. 3: Moses is saved from drowning in Nile River from Pharaoh's daughter. Drawn by Raphael in 1518.

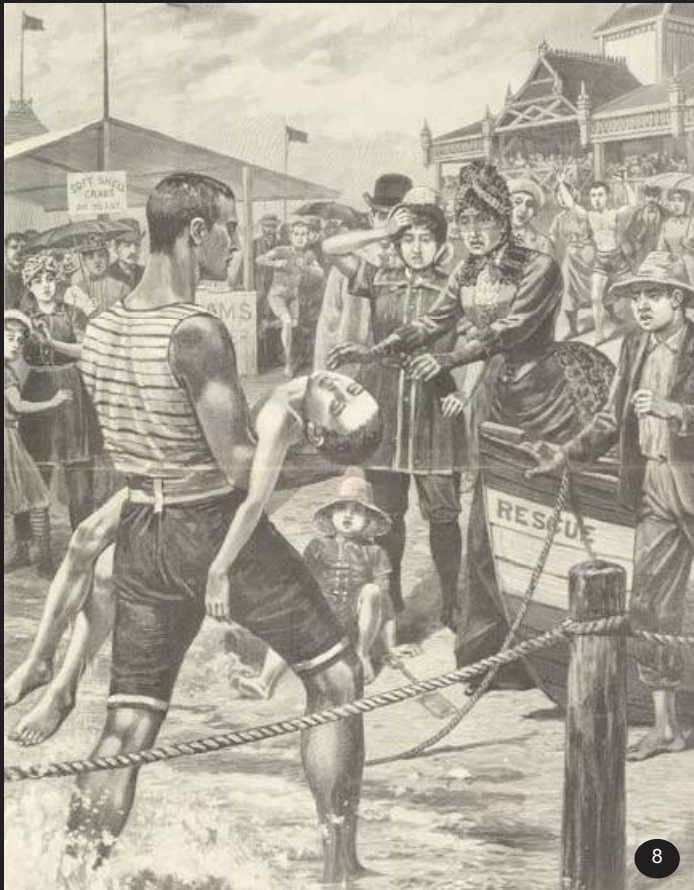
Pict. 4: A religious figure leads a group of people. While they try to cross a river, the bridge collapses and some of them drown. Displayed in the Morse Library, Beloit College.

Pict. 5: When Napoleon the Great attempted to escape from Elba Island where he was imprisoned, on a dark and stormy night he accidentally fell into the water. No sailor would dare to rescue him, jeopardising their own safety. Luckily, a Newfoundland dog jumped into the water, saving him from drowning. Drawn by Nikos Kouremenos.



Pict. 6: 'The Siren' depicts a siren holding a harp sitting on a rock in a coastal area. In front of her, a man is struggling to stay above the water in an effort to avoid drowning. The painting possibly depicts the legend that sirens used to seduce with their magic melody all sailors, who then fell into the sea, suffering tragic drowning deaths. Drawn by John William Waterhouse circa 1900.

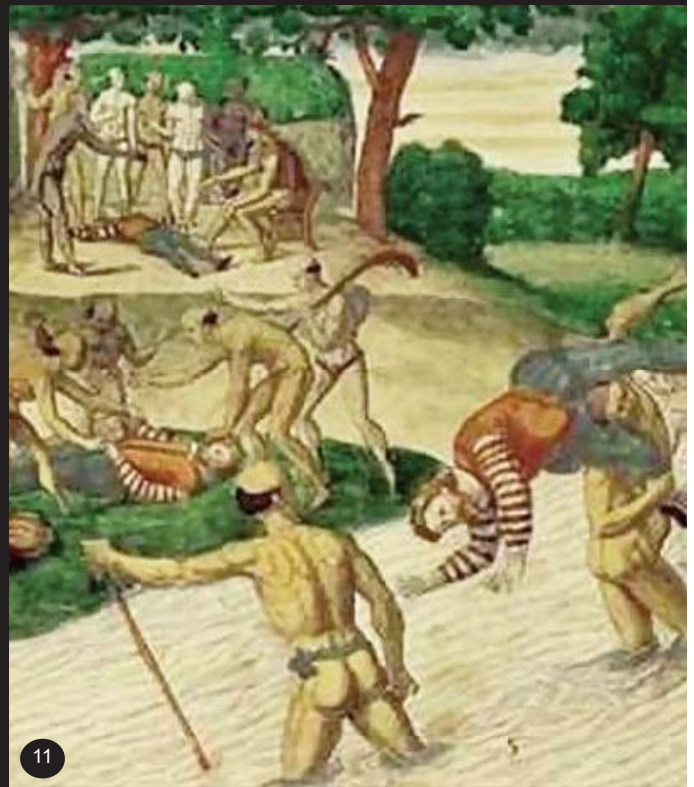
Pict. 7: This painting depicts the rescuing of a drowning trooper of the 13th Hussars near the ferry crossing. Drawn by unknown artist.



Pict. 8: On Coney Island, New York, a news-paper depicts a young man saving a young boy from drowning. Drawn by unknown artist.

Pict 9: People applying reach rescue to drowning victims during the Deluge. Drawn by Carracci Agostino (1616-1618).

Pict 10: Dirk Willem attempts to rescue from drowning the sheriff who was pursuing him for his Anabaptist beliefs. Drawn by unknown artist.



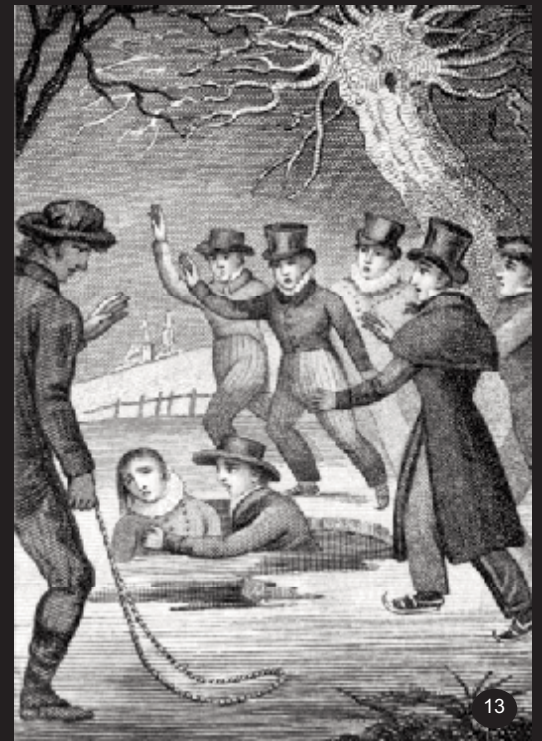
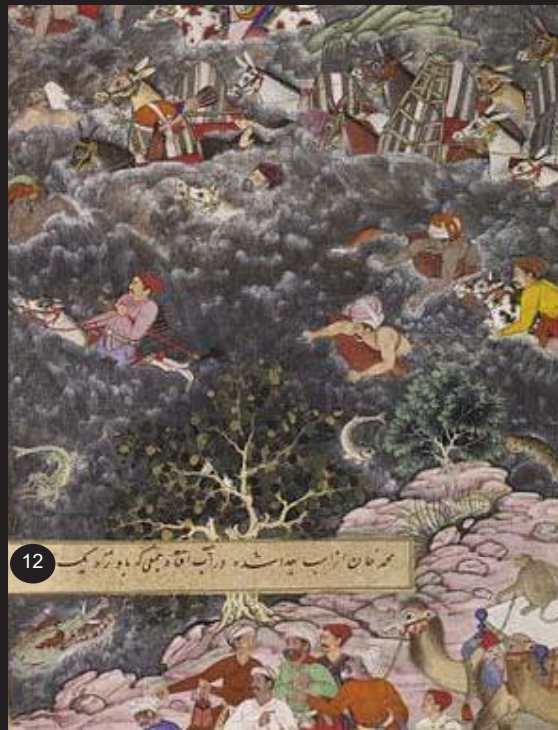
Pict. 11: South American Indians drown Spaniards to see if they are immortal. Drawn by Theodore de Bry.

Pict 12: An Pir Muhammad, drowns while crossing the Narbada chased by his enemies. Drawn by unknown artist.

Pict. 13: In 'The Little Quaker', Moodie refers to the drowning rescue of a young boy skater.

Pict 14: "Drowning in the Loire during the Reign of Terror 1793". Painted by H. de la Charlerie.





To conclude, drownings and rescues have inspired many artists throughout the centuries in numerous civilisations. While we cannot say precisely what their primary motives for drawing such scenes were, one thing is certain: they clearly left us, with an unparalleled heritage that can serve as an inspiration and a starting point of reference for our water safety endeavours.

Reference
Avramidis, S. (2010). *History of Aquatic Safety- A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Athens, Greece: Author.
Dr Stathis Avramidis, works as an Associate in the Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (Greece) and Visiting Research Fellow in Leeds Metropolitan University (UK). Author of 9 water safety books, he has twice been honored with the Diploma Award from the Royal Life Saving Society Commonwealth and with the 2009 Aquatic Safety Award from the International Swimming Hall of Fam. Contact: S.Avramidis@leedsmet.ac.uk, www.stathisavramidis.blogspot.com